

A Letter to Monsieur *Maurice de Nassau*, his Highness,  
at Amsterdam, written Anno. 1676.

The great Conclusion *Solomon* made from all these wise Reflections of his, upon things under the Sun is, fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man, his whole business and his whole Excellency, and therefore you and I shall always agree, that our first and great Duty is the Love and Service of our great Lord: and the second is like unto it, the Love and Service of our Country, but as the circumstances of our times are, these things can hardly be separated or distinguished, but are included one in the other, so that he which serves his Country must needs at the same time serve God.

Now the present Mischiefs that are upon our Country, do not (as to their second Cause) arise merely out of the common spring of boundless and restless ambition, but as implacable malice to the Protestant Interest, hath had a principal hand in the Effects: *Europe* is now groaning under, and indeed the danger is common to us both, and doth not less threaten *England* then *Holland*, though more remotely. For the French King, in growing to so great a Naval strength, may be reasonably apprehended to have his Eye upon *England*, when he shall have subjugated the Spanish *Netherlands*, which it may be he meant when he said upon some occasion, that hereafter he would bring his Men to a place where there were neither Gates nor Bars, which makes Men bold as well against Gods as their Enemies, and the Spirits of the Greatest and Wiest Men are not always so guarded, but that in their Gayeties their future Intentions drop out of their Mouthes, and Wicked Men do not only express their Natures in their Wicked sayings, by which Men may take warning of them, but they live after their Deaths in those sayings.

But I will at this time discourse to you a little more particularly. There are but two very strong Kingdoms in *Europe*; *France* and *England*, and the Reason of their strength is, that they are great in Territories, and of one piece and compact, in respect of which *Europe* may be considered in three Parts, *France*, *England*, and the Prince of *Swedes* confederated against *France*, which being a strength made up of many pieces and different Interests, will always be found too weak to be opposed against the Uniform Force of one great Kingdom, for which reason the League will come naturally to dissolution, and fall in pieces, and *England* cast the Balance, whose Interest is in today and that roundly, for Neutrality in this Case is both foolish and dangerous, as being

against all Reason of State, and in such case, he that obligeth none, dis-  
obligeth all, and the Conqueror will be sure to pursue his revenge against  
the Rival Prince.

I know there are three Characters in History ascribed to the *French*,  
the first was given to the Gauls their Predecessors by *Julius Caesar*, that in  
the beginning of a Fight they were more than Men and afterwards less  
than Women, and however it be true the present *French* inherit the same  
*Genius*, yet by discipline which hath a wonderful force in all things,  
we see they have brought even their Infantry for the most part to Fight  
well, so that by their Actions they have justly acquired the Reputation of a  
very War like Nation.

The second Character is that they are a People, Light, Inconstant and  
Faithless. 3. That they are of an aspiring *Genius*, which is for much the  
more dangerous to *Europe*, as the object they have set upon is great,  
and that is no less than to Erect an Universal Monarchy in *Europe*, a thing  
that can never be brought to pass; yet for all the Observation we make  
of other Men, we daily commit the same Errors, to this we may add,  
that the Course of the present *French* King is full of Rapid Violence and  
high Ambition, and Ambition will make Men wade through a World of  
Blood in the pursuit of vain ends; yet this I must say, that if two or  
three such Kings should immediately succeed one another in *France*, they  
would in Reason swallow *Europe*, if at the same time one weak and In-  
sufficient Prince should succeed another in *England*; but the Balance of  
the World is kept up not only by strong Nations fighting with the weak-  
er against stronger than they, but by an Interchangeable distribution in  
succession of strong and weak Princes in the same Kingdome, through the  
promiscuous dispensation of Divine Providence, which is irresistible, for  
he must leave all his Work to the Man that shall be after him, and who  
knows whether he shall be a Wise Man or a Fool, what a Wise Man gets  
a Fool loses.

Now on the other side, our Country-men, who are of a middle *Genius* between  
the *French* and your Country-men, are as warlike as any, but grave, plain,  
and honest. I know that our Country-men will be always ready to say, that  
*England* is now as strong as ever it was, and that we have always been an  
even match to *France*, we have made Two Conquests of *France*, one in the time  
of *Edward* the 3d. and another in the time of *Henry* the 5th, but I answer, the  
strength of a Kingdom is either Proper or Comparative, Proper, respecting  
themselves, or Comparative, respecting their Neighbors. Now if it should be  
granted, (which is not true) that *England* is now as strong as in former times,  
yet if *France* (which is true) be three times as strong as they were for-  
merly, *England* must needs be three times weaker Comparatively;

*England*

*England* being so far from holding proportion to *France* in its growth, that is is much weaker now than it was 20 Years ago. And this among other things may shew you the weakness of our Councils, in sitting still while the *French* make themselves Masters of the *Spanish Netherlands*, and then as to its proper strength we must come to distinguish, for he that does not distinguish well can never Judge well; I say then the People are strong but the Government is weak, from whence this Consequence may be drawn, that a People may be weak under one form of Administration, and strong under another, to prove which, there will need no other Instance then the Regiment of these three last Kings, and that of the Parliament interposed in the middle of them, but this will more clearly appear to you when we come to discourse of the Government it self.

There is no Kingdome in Story that I remember, in and about which so much Blood hath been shed as *England*, except *Sicily*, and the manner of the *English* hath always been to Fight in small Armies, without regarding the Number of their Enemies, who were sometimes, (as in the first Conquest of *France* abovenamed) above six to one, and yet the *English* have not oftner been brought to contend against Forreign Force, then they have carried away the Victory, if not in every Battle, yet in the Issue of the War. Therefore when *Machiavil* labors to overthrow the Common Doctrine in the Politicks, that Money is the Sinews of War, which he says is not true; I think it is true as to *England*, as well as in the *Roman* Commonwealth, but in *Holland* where you have a small Territory, and your Foundation is Trade, Money, and Industry; which produceth no *Martial Genius* in the Natives, nor permits leaseure, and where your Armies consist of Mercenaries, which will ever be found much weaker than the Native *Militia*, there Money may be the Sinews of War.

The Union of *England* and *Scotland* is a mighty Accession of strength to *England*, for besides that *Scotland* was always a dangerous Back-door to *England*, that mischief is not only removed, but such a Member added, as by reason of Vicinity naturally compounds one entire Body of a great Kingdom; and this strength would better have appeared if it had at any time since the Union, fallen under a Prince of a *Martial Genius*, as in time to come it will fall under a Vigorous Administration.

But to make what I said to you above more clear, that the Government of *England* is weak, I will a little discourse of the Nature of it.

*England* then is a Government Compounded and mixt of the three Principal kinds of Government, A King, who is a Sovereign, qualified and limited Prince, and the three Estates, who are the Lords Spiritual and Temporal compounding the Aristocratical part of the Government; and the

Commons in Parliament with an Absolute delegated power, making the Democratical part; the Legislative Authority is in the King, and the three Estates, the power of leavying Money in the Commons, and the Executive power in the King, but to be administered by Ministers sworn and qualified, which is the Reason of those two grand Maxims in the Law of *England*, first, that the King of *England* is always a Minor; and secondly, that he can do no wrong.

Now the Foundation this Government was first built and stood upon, was the Ballance of Lands, and *England* being a Kingdome of Territory not of Trade, it always was, and ever will be true, that the Ballance of Lands is the Ballance of Government; and this Maxim of the Ballance is to the Politicks, what the Compass is to Navigators, the Circulation of Blood to Physicians, Guns to an Army, and Printing to Learning.

The Proportion this Ballance held in the Government, was formerly in the King, Church, and Nobility above two Thirds, and in the whole People not one Third: So that if we divide the times of this Government into two General parts (as it naturally divides it self) from the *Norman Conquest* to the time of *Henry the 7th.* and from *Henry the 7th.* to the present time; then I say, in the first part of it, the Strength of the Government lay in the middle, or Aristocratical part as it ought to do, for a King must be supported either by a Nobility or an Army, and by this means the two extrems which are the King and People (of which extrems a Government can never be compounded to live long) were secured by the middle, for the Nobility not only supported the Throne, but shadowed the People from the Tyranny of the Princes.

And to give you a clear evidence of the truth of this, both that the strength of the Government was in the Aristocratical part, and that they kept the Ballance between the King and the People, I need only observe that all the Civil Wars that we ever had in *England* in those times, were ever made against the Princes by the Nobility, for their encroachments upon the People, and they always prevailed against them.

But *Henry the 7th.* who was a dark and suspicious Prince, and an entertainer of fortune by the day rather than of any great fore-sight (as my Lord *Bacon* observes of him) observing upon his coming to the Crown, how great an over-Ballance the Nobility had been to the Prince, made way by Laws, and other means for the Nobility to make alienations of their Lands, and so in seeking to cure one mischief he procured a far greater, which though it did not shew it self presently, yet in short time after it began to shake the Foundations of the Throne.

And from this time the Lands began to come into the hands of the People, and the times that followed served well to increase this beginning; for *Henry*  
the

the *Bish.* dissolving Abbies, and Monasteries, all those Lands which were very great came by degrees into the hands of the People, so that the greatest part of the Lands of the Antient Nobility, and great part of the Lands of the Church were in the hands of the People, who now held above two thirds of the whole Lands of *England*.

And therefore this consequence will be clear, that the strength of the Government is now in the Democratical part, and to confirm this to you by example. There hath been one Civil War in *England*, since *Henry* the Seventh, who made that War? the Barons? No, the People made it; then it is clear not only that the People are the strongest part, but that they are able to make War with the King, Nobility, and Church; also if there should be another Civil War in *England*, it would not only be by the People, but who-soever be the beginners of it, the People will prevail, as far as human Reason can foresee.

But now lest you should think the compliance of this Parliament with the King, a contradiction to what hath been said, I will discourse it to you before we go farther touching them.

This Parliament was chosen in the year 1661, and came in with a change of Government; now in all changes of Government, there is a violent concussion of the whole Body, and the People always pass from one extrem to another, without being able to stay in the middle; *England* therefore was then in a sick distempered condition, now it hath recovered its just Temper, and is restored to Health, (as strong Bodies will work out the Poyson they take by degrees.)

Now this Parliament represented the humors and distempers of the times wherein they were chosen, and consequently their Actions were violent, and they did many things afterward to be repented of, and no doubt had they done what they have done, to a designing and Parsimonious Prince, he might have taken the advantage of their Hearts to have undone *England*; for what with that great Revenue, and all those most mighty Aids they have given him, he might have made so great a Bank, and annexed so great a Revenue of Lands to the Crown, that he might have maintained an Army, overballanced the Nobility, and have Reigned without Parliaments, and so have brought *England* into the same condition with *France*, but these times are over, and not like to return; I am without all doubt therefore, that the profuseness, and inadvertency of the King hath saved *England* from falling into destruction under this Parliament.

And as this Parliament represented the sickly times, in which they were chosen, when the Pople of *England* were in a kind of Delirium or Dotage; so a New Parliament would represent a People restored to their Wits, cured of the Evil, and steadily pursuing the great Interest of the Common-wealth.

Where-



Wherefore our Court has got a new Maxime, never heard of in the World before, and which is their Grand Arcanum of State, and that is, that the King and this Parliament must never part; for if they do, the Government is dissolved: A Maxim they will keep to, and was first beaten into their Heads by *Clarendon* and *Monk*, but the true reason of that Maxime, is, because they never dare call a Parliament to represent the present state of *England*, having enough to do with the present, who were it not for the daily fomentations of Court Expedients, would even themselves revert back to the *English* Interest.

In former times we had two grand Maxims in our Government, one was that we should always keep the Ballance of *Christendom* equal and steady, *England* only having the natural advantage to do that, and this grew up with us from the *Norman* Conquest, for above Six hundred years since, the other was, that we should always make our selves the Head and Protection of the Protestant Interest, a Maxim that we took from the Reformation, and which we shew'd the World in Queen *Elizabeths* time, how we have kept to these two Maxims <sup>now</sup> of entring into a League, to subvert and destroy the Protestant Religion, and to break the Bonds, and remove the Land-marks of States and Kingdoms will sufficiently declare to you.

And now we have a Maxime, which I am sure cannot last longer than the King lives; for the death of the King is the death of the Parliament, one thing you may observe by the way, that vigorous times bring forth strong Maxims, but the principal use we are to make is this, if according to our Maxim, That the King and this Parliament must never part, and they must dye together; then this Government seems to be calculated only for the Kings life, as the Government of the Protector *Cromwel* was for his, and must a little time after suffer a Dissolution.

And indeed, in such a mixt Government as ours is, where one of the extremes comes so far to over-balance the other; I cannot see but the Government must dye, as it is in natural Bodies, when one humour is over all the rest in to great disproportion.

In every sound and healthful Government, there is a steadiness of proceeding by good means to good ends, which is called Conduct, but in a sickly state, as many Emergencies arise, so new Medicines and Expedients must be applyed, and such a Government may be called a Government of Expedients, and such a one is ours, and the great Art and Cunning in this Session of Parliament, to bring it to such an Issue as is expected, is but an Expedient, and Expedients never hold, they only serve a turne; Cunning and Tricks in States-men, argue them to be Mountebanks in the Politicks, and weak Governments must always have a care of evil Accidents and Occasions, when there are Causes of their dissolution.

The

The Ravishment of *Lucretia* was not the cause of the Introducing a Commonwealth in *Rome*, it was only the occasion; if any notable occasion fall but in *England*, as the Death of the King, Insurrection, or Arming of Papists, Invasion by the *French*, or such like that shall give the People opportunity to Arms, the Government is gone.

Now if you should ask what are the causes of this weakness of the Government of *England*, I answer principally two, 1. The change of the balance as I have shewed you before. 2. A Succession of Three weak Princes together, where Two sufficient Princes succeed together, they do great things, but where Two or Three weak Princes succeed one another, the Government can hardly stand, and indeed if a weak Prince immediately succeed a wise, he may do well enough, for the Virtue of the wise Princes Government, runs through the Veins of that of the Foolish, and so it comes to pass, that it is a great while before the defects of his Government come to discover themselves; and I say that we never before (for above Six hundred years) had a succession of Three, either sufficient or weak Princes together, and therefore I make no doubt to affirm, that if the Government of the Parliament had not been interposed in the middle (as I said before) the Government must have sunk ere now; for save what they did, we have not taken one true step, nor struck one true stroke since Queen *Elizabeth*.

It is a great truth no doubt, that foolish Princes ever had, and ever will have foolish Counsellors, for *Matthiævil* concluded well, when he said, That the Wisdom of the Prince, never takes beginning from the Wisdom of his Council, but the Wisdom of the Council always from the Wisdom of the Prince.

But if you should ask me now whether the K. of *England* will effectually assist you since the Parliament hath not only addressed him so to do, but has promised him sufficient supplies for the doing thereof. I answer, no, the reasons whereof are not to be rendered by way of Ratiocination, there being little of reason in any thing we either do or say.

1. The K. will not, the Will is the Mistress of the Love, and a man is either good or bad, as his Will is, there is an antipathy between the Genius of our Court, and the Genius of *Holland*. 2. We are wholly addicted to the *French* humour and interest, we cannot forbear expressing our joys upon any Victory of theirs. 3. The D. of *York* who does, and every day will weigh more and more, and is in the way of all those good intentions the K. might otherwise have, is a Papist, and so far from affecting you, that he hath little esteem for his own Countrymen, in his nature affecting none but *French* and *Irish*, with whom he seems to have a Sympathy of Genius, and how strangely strong Wills, and misplaced Affections may transpore Men of weak judgments is easie for you to apprehend. 4. Our Ministers of State are against you.

Now

Now to end this long Letter, what conclusion shall we draw from all these Premises. I doubt not but your prudence will instruct you to make a far better than any I can offer, however I will say something, if it be but to occasion you to think, the Parliament and People of *England* have a mighty Affection to your state; these are the shapes of our Court and our People, in the best manner I can present them to you, and if I mistake not, your State can never in time to come be better secured against shaking, than by the friendship of *England*. The Parliament would send over an Army sufficient to engage the *French*, and pay them to, as I have ground to think.

Wherefore in my poor opinion, the natural result might be, that the States should by an effectual Declaration Remonstrate to the World, the growing greatness of *France*, and all the mischievous consequences it draws after it, and to call upon *England* as the Head of all Protestant States for their assistance, to which the late address, and the measures the Court shall take thereupon will naturally tend, only the time of such Declaration cannot well be determined; and for this the States have a President yet fresh in Memory, when they publicly offered to the State their differences with the Court of *England*, which gave the Parliament occasion to Recognize the matter, and what an admirable and speedy effect that produced, cannot yet be forgotten.

P I N I S.